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NARRATIVE

OF

RECENT PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS OF NEW-YORK,

IN RELATION TO

THE INDIANS

IN THAT STATE.

PUBLISHED FOR THE INFORMATION OF FRIENDS.

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NARRATIVE,

&c.

IT is well known, that the members of our religious society have long felt a deep interest in the welfare of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of this land ; and the Yearly Meeting of New-York, has, for many years, extended a care over some of the tribes in this state.

During the sittings of our last Yearly Meeting, this committee appointed some of their number to visit the Indians, in order to obtain more full information than they then possessed, of their condition and prospects.

In the 7th month following, the Friends separated to that service, made the following report.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE YEARLY MEETING OF NEW-YORK, ON
INDIAN CONCERNS.

The friends appointed by the Committee on Indian Concerns, in New-York, to co-operate with like committees appointed by the Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and Genesee, in visiting, as way might open, the Indian Reservations within the state of New-York, may inform, that in pursuance of these several appointments, John Wilson Moore and Joseph S. Walton, of Philadelphia, Charles Marriott and Abraham Bell, of New-York, and Griffith M. Cooper, William S. Burling and Elisha Freeman, of Genesee, have visited a number of those settlements ; and now offer the following report :

ONONDAGAS.

On the 7th day of the 6th month, 1839, three of the committee visited the Onondaga Indians. Their Reservation is situated about seven miles South from Syracuse. We were told it was two and a quarter miles wide, by three and three-quarters long, and contains a population of three hundred persons. As this tribe is the one towards which the labors of Friends in New-York Yearly Meeting,

have been heretofore chiefly directed, they will naturally inquire with what success ?

At the time our committee first visited the Onondagas, we are informed, there was but one house in the whole Reservation, and the committee placed the door of that house upon four stakes driven into the earth, to form a table, from which to eat the provisions they carried with them. A few miserable bark huts formed the rest of their habitations, and the people were in as wretched a state as could well be imagined. Cut off from their former means of support, the chase—oppressed, despised, and robbed with impunity by the whites.

The Indian met with no encouragement from the white man, to improve his condition, and the distance between their two modes of life appeared utterly impassable. Hopeless of better days, he gave himself up to intemperance and listless inaction, waiting the approach of that which seemed to be his inevitable fate, the speedy extinction of his race, in wretchedness !

At this period, the hearts of a few individuals were touched, we doubt not, by the finger of *Him* who implanted compassion in the human breast, to stretch forth a hand of help. This feeling, through their instrumentality became diffused to others, and aided by the energy and faithfulness of our devoted friend Aden T. Cory, for many years the resident Superintendent for the Society of Friends to this tribe, and whose name is dear to them, great good has been effected.

Attached to the first Indian habitation we approached, we saw a field of six or eight acres of excellent wheat, and another about as large, of oats, and seven fine cows grazing. The house was a respectable looking frame dwelling, perhaps twenty by thirty feet, one story and a half high, much like those belonging to the middling class of whites. The next two were of a similar description; we observed in one of them a curled maple table, windsor chairs, &c. ; before the door were two new ploughs, and two new scrapers for making and repairing the roads through the Reservation. What we saw of these lands appeared more hilly than the surrounding country—the soil was fertile, with some rich valleys ; we followed the road through one of these about a mile ; there was a good fence on each side, from six to nine rails high ; and we saw some fine meadows and fields of corn, potatoes, beans, &c.

Their council-house is a commodious white frame building. We

visited about a dozen houses, mostly frame, though some were built of hewn logs; in most of them we saw a churn, and in one an Indian woman was churning when we entered. Most of the Indians, we were told, keep one or more cows, and their barns are at least as numerous as their houses. Their lodgings are on cot-bedsteads—the beds and a few simple articles of furniture exhibit but little neatness or order. A wooden mortar and pestle, for pounding corn, a few iron pots, stools and wooden utensils, with scarcely an article of crockery, seemed generally to comprise their whole stock of household furniture. Some of the houses have only shutters without glass windows. The Indians were decently dressed, some made a good appearance, though many retained peculiarities of the red man, such as broaches, ear-rings, bead embroidered leggins, &c. They make good sleds, and we saw one making a plough-beam in a workman-like manner; he lived in a good two-story frame house. They have too many horses and dogs; but not enough other domestic animals, such as cows, sheep, pigs and poultry. Their houses are mostly about twenty by thirty feet, generally not painted; they own a saw-mill and rent it to a white man, who saws their logs on shares. There is no grist-mill in the settlement, though they have many good mill-sites. They want mechanics, particularly blacksmiths. But few of them understand English, hence we found it difficult to communicate with them. It appears they have never had a school, except for several short periods, while Aden T. Cory resided among them. In conversing, through an interpreter, with a few Indians, including three chiefs, they expressed their willingness to have a school established, if they could obtain a Friend for teacher, and in that case they might apply a part of their annuity to its support. We found some of their people had an objection to school-learning; having observed that among the whites, where it was general, it did not appear to have made them better men, whatever other advantages it had given them. They feared their young men, on acquiring it, might depart from the simplicity of their fathers, associate with the whites, become dissipated, and “*sell away the lands of the nation.*”

These objections, we think, might be removed if they were convinced that the evils they fear, and from which they have already suffered so much, are not the *necessary* and *inevitable* attendants on civilization; they might then view its institutions more

favorably. We could not, however, urge them to apply their annuity, (which amounts only to the pittance of five dollars for each person,) to an object, in their view, of doubtful utility.

The state of New-York, only, has the right of purchasing the lands of the Onondagas, whenever they may wish to sell. The nation holds the entire Reservation, but each individual possesses in severalty, whatever land he chooses to enclose and cultivate; the whole product is his own, and he can even sell his house and improvements to any other Indian, but not to a white man, though white men do occasionally hire portions of their lands, or cultivate them on shares. They told us they raised enough for their support, and sold sufficient to afford them the means of obtaining many of the comforts of life. We met several Indian teams loaded with bark, for sale, on their way to the tanners. The interior of their habitations, when compared with those of well ordered white families, in equally good circumstances, would appear very uncomfortable, but when contrasted with the bark wigwams, &c., of their ancestors, show great improvement. As they advance in civilization, their wants will doubtless increase, as well as their ability to supply them.

None of this nation appear to have joined any society of Christian professors: their religion is of the most simple character, inculcating reverence for the Great Spirit, and for Him only—and that he will reward them according to their actions.

This nation does not, in our opinion, absolutely require any further aid from Friends, other than occasional advice.

TONAWANDAS.

A part of the Committee on Indian Concerns of Genesee Yearly Meeting, now joined us, and we proceeded to the Tonawanda Reservation.

The population is stated to be between five and six hundred. On approaching the settlement, we travelled on Indian lands, perhaps about two miles, on the banks of a feeder, made to convey water from the Tonawanda Creek to the Erie Canal. This we learned had impaired the value of the creek for fishing, and greatly injured some valuable mill-sites belonging to the Indians.

We had previously heard that this was one of the most prosperous Indian settlements in the state, and were pleased to find it answer our expectations; we admired the general appearance

of comfort and improvement around us ; the ground was dry and fertile and the fences and crops were good.

We called at the house of Black Chief, who was absent ; several of his family, men and women, were hoeing an adjoining field of good corn ; none understood English except the interpreter, a white man, who informed us that all in this settlement except one or two persons, were opposed to emigration.

They appeared to be well supplied with horses, cattle, &c. Some of their lands we found were rented to white people, at from two to three dollars an acre per annum. On visiting a number of their houses, we found them comfortable, and their furniture and cooking utensils more numerous, and of better quality than those usually found in Indian dwellings. We called on Blacksmith, a chief, who had been to Washington on account of the treaty, and was anxious to learn its fate. On our return, we again passed near Black Chief's habitation ; he was then at home, and advanced to meet us with a warmth and animation of manner very agreeable to us. We could not hold much conversation with him, the interpreter being absent.

The Indians have discriminating minds, and the wise among them are now seeking to obtain the advantages of civilization, while they would avoid the vices and miseries that have heretofore been its sad attendants. The question then arises, can we second and strengthen their efforts to this end ? We may watch over them, to prevent the fraudulent sale of their lands, and endeavor to remove and prevent the establishment of houses of intemperance in their immediate vicinity. At one of these, on the very border of their Reservation, we were told that a large proportion of the Tonawandas refused to taste spirituous liquors ; still the temptation to others is too powerful to be resisted, and ought to be removed far from them. The religion of the Tonawandas is like that of the Onondagas, and all other North American Indians who have not embraced some one of the various professions of Christianity.

TUSCARORAS.

6th month, 15th. We visited the Tuscarora's Reservation, which contains 6920 acres ; 5000 of which we learned were purchased by the Indians from the Holland Land Company, and no one holds a pre-emption right over this portion of it. Population 280 persons. We met here with an old chief, Cusack, who told us he was in favor

of emigrating, though he was scarcely able to walk, from age and infirmity. The rail-road to the Falls of Niagara passes through this tract, and we were pleased to learn that compensation had been made to the Indians for the injuries sustained thereby. We dined this day with Margaret Doxtater, an Indian widow, who spoke good English, and appeared to be an intelligent and pious woman. Her son teaches the school at the mission house; he informed us that a small proportion only of the tribe wished to remove, and that those who have consented to go, have mostly been bribed; many evidences of this having already come to light.

One of our company called with the interpreter on an Indian who is a large farmer. He had just finished ploughing for wheat, a field of about twenty acres, and was enclosing, from the common, another field of like size, in good rail fence. We entered unexpectedly, and found him sitting alone, reading an English Testament; he had also one in the Mohawk tongue, which he understood, but had learned English enough to read, though not to speak the language; he had also a hymn-book, English and Indian, in alternate columns. He had scarcely reached middle age, owned an excellent farm, and we were told had earned and placed out on interest about three thousand dollars.

We then proceeded on our way to the

CATTARAUGUS RESERVATION.

This settlement is now under the immediate care of Genesee Yearly Meeting. After travelling a difficult road, for two miles through the woods, that nearly surrounded the Indian settlement, we emerged from them, near the brink of an abrupt descent of perhaps two hundred feet; below lay a delightful valley, several miles wide, nearly level, extending east and west as far as the eye could reach. It was studded over, here and there, with Indian habitations. Through this valley ran the Cattaraugus creek, or river, though hidden from our sight by trees. The first dwellings we approached were without chimneys, and about the poorest we had seen. It was a pleasant evening, and we met several men, women and children, returning from the labors of the field, with hoes in their hands. We proceeded down the valley, on a pretty good road, to the settlement granted by the Indians to Friends, for the support of an Indian school.

This establishment is on the main road from Lodi to Lake Erie. The buildings are placed on a green lawn of about an acre, and consist of a dwelling-house twenty-six by thirty-six feet, school-house, barn, and other out-buildings. The farm contains about two hundred acres; seventy of which are well enclosed, and cultivated in wheat, oats, Indian corn, potatoes, &c., with considerable meadow, all in good condition. It is superintended by Joseph N. Hillman, a Friend, much beloved by the Indians, and well calculated for the station he occupies. The school is at present taught by a young woman from Vermont; who had been employed at the Mission School, which is now discontinued; and feeling a desire to be useful to this class of people, readily embraced the opening in our school, at one dollar and fifty cents a week, and her board. We attended the school, and procured a specimen of Indian writing; there were present fourteen small Indian, and a number of white children, who, with their parents, reside among them. In winter, we were told, it was attended by an average of twenty-four; many of the larger children being now at home, employed in hoeing corn; a number of whom we saw, and found they could read, write and cypher, and speak tolerable English.

This Reservation extends from the mouth of Cattaraugus Creek, seven miles into the interior, and is four miles wide; the soil is light, fertile, and easy to cultivate. The principal clearings are along the public road, producing fine grass and grain. But a small portion of the valley is yet cleared, much of the timber being heavy. The dwellings are principally built of logs, though there are a number of snug frame houses, with good barns and other out-houses. There is a saw-mill, rented to a white man, and much timber is cut on this Reservation.

The following memorandum, made by the committee who visited them, will convey some idea of the situation of a number of Indian families.

John White, a chief, resides in a valley north of the council-house and is comfortably situated; he has a frame house twenty by thirty feet, one story and a half high, with a chimney in the middle; it was furnished with beds, a few chairs, clock, looking-glass, cooking and other kitchen utensils. The house was clean, and an appearance of comfort prevailed, giving evidence of domestic industry—two daughters were working ornamental leggins, the rest of the family, mother, sons and daughters, were at work in a

corn-field, which looked well and in good order. He had horses, cows, hogs, agricultural implements, &c.

Israel Jameson resides in the western part of the Reservation, and is quite an extensive farmer, surrounded with most of the comforts of white people; he had fine fields of barley and extensive meadows.

Samuel Gordon's is one of the best establishments we visited; more neatness and comfort is observable than in most.

Young Chief, one of the principal chiefs, was building a new house, for himself, and we rejoiced to see that his son was the builder. While at his house, he showed us a document signed by a large number of Friends, of Philadelphia, dated about the year 1798, stating in substance, that they totally disavowed any wish to obtain their lands, their furs, or their money, in return for any thing they had done for the Indians; and we told him we were the same people. His house and rooms had also the appearance of comfort.

The interior of a number of other houses we visited, appeared to us uncomfortable; they had large fire-places, with a few chairs and stools. Various articles of clothing, harness and agricultural implements hung around the walls and ceiling. Thus, the interior of their dwellings do not exhibit the conveniencies that their improvements without would lead us to expect; varying, from a log hut, without a floor or chimney, a fire built at one end, and an opening in the roof to let out the smoke—a stool and very few culinary articles; to a good frame dwelling, with beds, chairs, tables, crockery, and kitchen utensils, much in the order of a farmer in comfortable circumstances. Many of the men dress like their white neighbors; the women generally dress in short gowns and petticoats, ornamented leggins and moccasins, or shoes; they wear the blanket or shawl over the head and shoulders, and trinkets about the neck. They commonly eat but twice a day, or when hungry, though many are beginning to adopt the practice of eating at regular periods, like white people; their principal diet is boiled homony, sometimes sweetened with maple sugar; these Indians may be called a sober people. As far as we could learn, there appears to have been no actual suffering for want of the necessaries of life, among them, during the last few years; some support themselves well by making moccasins, &c. for sale. The women still work in the fields, with their husbands. There are a number in this, as in other reservations, who let out their cleared land to white people, at an annual rent of from two to three dollars per acre.

A new council-house was in progress, the Secretary of War having directed that the Grand Council of the Six Nations should be held at this place, in 8th month next. It is a large frame building, erected at the expense of the Indians.

Arrangements having been made for a council to be held this day, we visited the old council-house at 10 A. M., found the fire kindled, and a large kettle of homony preparing for the Indians who might attend, from a distance. More than twenty women, most of them with infants in their arms, occupied one portion of the house; these infants were brought to be vaccinated, which was done at the close of the council, by Dr. John Wilson Moore.

We went to the assembly about 1 P. M.; after a short pause, Young Chief arose and spoke a few words, which the interpreter rendered in short sentences, to this import: "Brothers! It is the will of the Great Spirit that we should meet here this day. We thank him that he has put it into your hearts to visit your red brethren. Brothers! we thank the Great Spirit that he has preserved you in your journey. We are now ready to hear what you have to say to us."

One of our number then addressed them and said, their brethren, the Quakers, had sent a deputation from toward the rising sun, to see them, and inquire after their welfare—expressed his satisfaction at observing their progressive improvement in the cultivation of their lands, and pointed out the necessity of their continuing to advance in that respect. He urged the advantages that would result from sending their children, more generally, to school; and said, he supposed that many of the large scholars were at this season needed by their parents, to assist in raising their crops, and that this circumstance made the school smaller than it otherwise would be. He then stated the benefit that would arise from the women's paying greater attention to neatness, and to the increase of domestic comforts, which would encourage their husbands and sons to be industrious in providing them the means. And, lastly, he adverted to the absolute necessity of totally abstaining from *strong waters*.

After a little deliberation, Young Chief replied, taking up each subject in the order in which it was mentioned. He fully admitted the excellency of the advice given them, to improve their lands; hoped they would continue to improve; said they had many difficulties to struggle with, and desired Friends would not be

discouraged at their slow progress. He was pleased to see that we had made allowance for the smallness of the school, and attributed it to the right cause. He seconded the advice to their females, spoke judiciously in relation to it; and closed with these emphatic expressions, on the subject of temperance; "If we fail in this, we fail in every thing."

Other chiefs also spoke. The subject of the treaty for the sale of their lands, evidently lay heavy upon them. They thought it "hard, *very hard*, to be forced from their present homes." Out of five hundred inhabitants, they did not think one hundred were willing to go; although this Reservation was deemed to be more favorable to emigration than any other we had seen.

At our request, Israel Jameson, a chief, who had been deputed to visit the district of land designed for them, beyond the Mississippi, rose, and described it to us as follows:

He said, "they travelled many days through a fine country, abounding with deer and turkies, but they were told this was the white man's land; Indians must not hunt there. At last they came to a stream, the boundary, as they were informed, of the land designed for the New-York Indians. This stream had abrupt banks, perhaps sixty feet high; yet, he observed, the high-water marks on the trees were several feet above the banks. After some unsuccessful attempts, they succeeded in crossing it on a raft. They observed the river was skirted with timber from half a mile to two miles wide, he thought it could not in any place exceed three miles; '*all beyond was one vast prairie,*' and which was wet near the river; he had jumped upon the ground and made it shake for rods. Further on, it was covered with stones. In dividing the land into three hundred and twenty acre lots, as proposed by the government, it was clear that most of them would be destitute of wood; and the little there was on the margin of the stream, as all would have to use it, would be soon cut off; the trees too, were small compared, with those of Cattaraugus. J. F. Schermerhorn, United States Agent, told them, this was a fine country for Indians, a perfect Paradise—plenty of hunting and fishing. As for fishes, he saw none, for the water was too muddy to see them in it, and he saw none jump out; and the game would soon be gone. The few Indians he saw there were nearly naked, and so wretched, that, to see them, would make *even the heart of an Indian to ache!*"

The contrast between that country and the lovely valley of their own Cattaraugus, with its clear streams and noble forests, was so great, that they would rather die than make the exchange. He observed that the lands set apart for some other tribes, particularly for the Cherokees, were better than those designed for the New-York Indians. One of the Indians, an aged man, said he would "take the life of that woman, and those children," pointing to his wife and family, "and sell his own life as dearly as he could, rather than go;" and on being remonstrated with, added "it were better to do so, than consign them to a lingering, miserable death." This last incident did not occur in council.

Several of the deputation addressed the Indians, encouraging them, notwithstanding many gloomy prospects, to persevere in industriously acquiring greater knowledge of agriculture and the mechanic arts; and to send their children to school, by which means they might avail themselves, more and more, of the advantages of civilized life. The women were advised to improve themselves in spinning, sewing, and to be neat in their houses; they were told much depended on their exertions in these respects, in advancing the prosperity of their people, and in enabling them to rise to greater usefulness.

To which Young Chief and Jameson made appropriate replies, expressing their full satisfaction with the school and its superintendent.

After the chiefs had closed their remarks, they informed us that they clearly understood our visit was one of investigation and inquiry only. An Indian, named Jacob Johnson, then stepped forward, and said, "I am no chief, but feel so thankful to the Great Spirit, for sending you, that I thought it required of me to acknowledge it. I remember, with feelings of gratitude, the counsel I heard from Friends, at Alleghany, when I was a boy; and if we had all been careful to follow that advice, our condition would be much better at this day;" adding, that he felt no disposition to boast of his own attainments, but he could tell us, that the clothes he then wore, (and he was well dressed,) were of his own manufacturing. He then expressed a wish to shake hands with us, and did so very cordially.

Young Chief returned thanks to the Great Spirit, that we had met; hoped that he would preserve us on our return home, and restore us in safety to our families and friends; and that if we met no more in this world, we might in another. The council then broke up.

We made arrangements to have a census taken of all the Indian population, over sixteen years of age, in the Cattaraugus and Buffalo Reservations, stating how they stand as to emigration.

Two of the chiefs came to take leave of us next morning, and we parted with feelings that will long be remembered.

In the 11th month, 1840, the engagement of Friends, with the Indians, as respects the school and the two hundred acres of land set apart for its support, will expire ; after which period, it is specified in the articles of agreement, between the Indians and the Committee of Genesee Yearly Meeting, that it shall be continued, under the care of a joint committee of Indians and Friends, for the education of the children in the Cattaraugus Reservation, for ever.

We next visited the

BUFFALO RESERVATION.

This Reservation we passed through on our way to Cattaraugus. We called at Big Kettle's habitation : he was not at home, having retired to a distant residence, in poor health. He is said to be a man of great powers of mind ; is the first chief of the Seneca Nation since Red Jacket, and preserves the simplicity of the Indian character. His house, a small log building, we felt strongly inclined to enter, but an ox-yoke leaning against the door (the Indian lock and key) forbade the act, and we retired, with feelings of respect, for the honesty of a people who require no other guard for their property.

The main-road leads through this Reservation, crossing the creek several times on good bridges.

The land is fine and rich, with considerable clearings on both sides of the road. There are about seven hundred and forty inhabitants. Their houses are both frame and log, with barns and out-houses. Several of the houses are very commodious, and their interior arrangements are much better than many we had seen ; some were well-furnished. Their women were well clad, and tolerably attentive to domestic order ; they still wear some beads, broaches, &c. The men were dressed, mostly like the whites, and the young men generally read and write, and speak English. They have one school, attended by from ten to twenty-five pupils, averaging about sixteen. They are now convinced of the necessity of quitting the chase, becoming farmers, and some, of educating their children.

There are a few mechanics among them, such as plough-makers, carpenters and tailors, but in these branches they have made little progress, owing to their near vicinity to Buffalo, where they can have their wants easily supplied. They have greatly improved in temperance, and had they not been so harrassed on the question of emigration, their advancement in other respects would have been more conspicuous. The permanent improvements making in the several settlements, we thought, spoke in language stronger than words, the general opposition to removal. But we were surprised to observe similar improvements in and about the dwellings of some who had signed to go ; this circumstance was, however, explained. We were told, that in addition to the money offered, to induce the chiefs to sign, a number of them had also obtained the promise of retaining a life-possession in their present farms. Thus, while selling the lands of others, they sought to retain their own.

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN CONCERNS.

At a Meeting of the Committee, held in New-York, 7th month, 9th, 1839. Present thirty-two members.

The committee appointed at our last meeting, to visit the Indians, in company with some Friends of Philadelphia and Genesee Yearly Meetings, made an interesting report of their visit to several tribes in our state ; which was very acceptable to us, and it was directed that it be entered on our records.

Information was given to the committee, that a number (nine) of our body had waited on the President of the United States, now in this city, to ask him to delay signing the treaty lately made with the Indians in this state, until we could lay before him evidence, that fraud had been used in obtaining it. He received them kindly, and informed them, that the Secretary of War, J. R. Poinsett, in order to ascertain the true state of the case, would go out and meet the Indians in council, between the first and tenth of next month ; and the President invited the committee to delegate some of their

members to be present on the occasion, and see that justice was done to the Indians. On consideration, the following Friends were appointed for that purpose, viz. Robert Hicks, Thomas Carpenter, Amos Willets, Daniel Carpenter, Silas Carle, Nathaniel Starbuck, Samuel Smith, Abraham Bell, and Charles Marriott. And the Clerk was directed to write to John W. Moore, of Philadelphia, and Griffith M. Cooper, of Wayne County, in this state, giving them the foregoing information, and also to inform them of the appointment of a committee, by us, to meet similar delegations from the committees of the Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and Genesee, should they think fit to appoint such delegation: and they are hereby authorized to represent us in the proposed council, and afford the Indians such advice as they may deem best, and report to this committee.

At a meeting of the Committee on Indian Concerns, held in New-York, the 2d of 9th month, the committee last mentioned made the following report.

The Council met at Cattaraugus the 13th of 8th month, and closed the following day.

All the deputation from New-York Yearly Meeting attended, and Benjamin Ferris, George Truman and Henry Ridgway, from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and Griffith M. Cooper and William S. Burling, from the Yearly Meeting of Genesee. Soon after their arrival, Friends divided themselves into several committees, and met committees appointed by the Indians, to consult, investigate and arrange the business; and they were pleased to find that the Indians were so competent to manage their own concerns *in council*, as not to require the interference of Friends.

In the able report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, at Washington, transmitted with the message of the President at the opening of the third session of the twenty-fifth congress, 1838-9, we find it stated, on the authority of R. H. Gillet, United States Commissioner for the New-York Indians, that "The fee of this land (the Seneca's) is held by Massachusetts, in trust for individuals known as the Ogden Company, while the Senecas have a *possessory* right to it."

This view of the subject we deem entirely erroneous.

The indefeasible right of inheritance, we believe, is vested exclusively in the Indians, and, we think, no better title can exist.

The following document will show that this view of the subject has been fully recognized by the government.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

To all People to whom these Presents shall come, GREETING :

Whereas it has been represented by some of the chief men of the Seneca and Onondaga nations of Indians, that they are entitled to certain reserved tracts of land lying on the Cattaraugus Creek, and on, or near the Alleghany, and which has been surveyed, laid off, and the lines regularly run, and distinctly understood. That they are not in possession of deeds securing to them the peaceable and undisturbed occupancy thereof. As well, therefore, to remove all apprehensions from the minds of the chief men and others, of the Seneca and Onondaga nations, as to secure to them the possession of said lands. It is hereby announced, and declared by the authority aforesaid, on behalf of the Government of the United States, that all lands claimed by, and secured to the said Seneca and Onondaga nations of Indians, by treaty, convention, or deed of conveyance, or reservation; lying and being within the limits of the United States; shall be, and remain the property of the said Seneca and Onondaga nations, *for ever*; unless they shall voluntarily relinquish or dispose of the same.

And all persons, citizens of the United States, are hereby strictly forbidden to disturb said Indian nations, in their quiet possession of said lands.

Given under my hand, and the seal of the War Office of the United States, this seventeenth day of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and two.

(Signed,)

II. DEARBORN,
Secretary of War.

It appears to us, that the Ogden Company can have no claim to these lands, further than a pre-emption right; and, how far even that claim is valid, seeing the Indians, the only real owners of the soil, have never been parties thereto, it is not for us at this time to investigate. It may suffice to say, that, had we found the Indians willing to sell, and that a fair and honorable contract had been entered into by them, we should have interposed no obstacle to its fulfilment.

The following is a summary of the facts that appeared to us to be satisfactorily established.

After the council had been opened, the Indians stated that it was concluded that the deputation of chiefs from each of the six nations should answer separately.

The Senecas, being the largest nation, including the following reservations, viz. Alleghany, Cattaraugus, Buffalo and Tonewanda, came forward first, and stated their objections to the treaty. They strongly urged, that they held nothing to be valid in national concerns of this magnitude, that was not done in *open council*. They admitted that the amended treaty had been fully and fairly explained to them by the United States Commissioner, in councils previously held, and that sixteen chiefs only, came forward in open council, and signed it, and that sixty-two came forward in the same council and signed a protest against it. This latter act, the United States agent refused to acknowledge, but General Dearborn, commissioner for Massachusetts, being present, affixed his name as witness thereto.

That council was continued many weeks during the busiest season of the harvest of last year, greatly to the detriment of the Indians in getting in their crops; and during its intervals, the signatures of an additional number of chiefs were privately obtained, by means hereafter to be developed; against which the Indians earnestly protest.

From accounts, taken with great care and labor, it appears, that, of the whole Seneca nation, in all their reservations, two thousand three hundred and fifty-nine persons were opposed to emigration, and to the amended treaty; and one hundred and forty-six professedly in favor of both.* Of this small minority, several were chiefs, who had obtained written obligations from H. B. Potter, agent of the Ogden Company, promising them large sums of money, and in a number of instances, life-leases of the farms where they now reside, on condition that the treaty be carried into effect. Copies of articles of this description, entered into with seven chiefs, were placed in the hands of the Secretary of War, after he had seen the originals, wherein more than seventeen thousand dol-

* Statistical tables, duly attested, giving the names of heads of families, &c. too voluminous for this publication, may be seen, by calling on William C. White, clerk of the Indian Committee.

lars had been thus promised, two of which we annex. See Appendix, A. and B.

Several other chiefs, whose names appear to the said treaty, have attested, before magistrates, that if their names are so affixed, it has been done without their knowledge or consent, or through unfair and dishonorable means.

Thus it appears, that those who profess to be in favor of the treaty, as amended, are to *remain* and be made *rich*, on condition of selling the lands of their brethren, who, although irreconcilably opposed to going, are to be forced to emigrate, with the loss of valuable improvements.

It may be proper to state, that those opposed to removal, have repeatedly, and in open council at that time, offered the emigrating party their full share of the lands and annuities of the nation; but these offers have not been accepted.

It was stated in council, by those in favor of the treaty, that presents were always given to the chiefs, in making treaties, and that the *Quakers* themselves gave presents on such occasions. Of the truth of this assertion we had no evidence. If presents were ever made by the proprietors of Pennsylvania, on occasion of any treaty, they were tokens of friendship, after the conclusion of such treaty—not secret promises of large sums to the chief, on condition that they would make cessions of their people's lands, contrary to the known will of the nation. The *one* we view as an honorable liberality, the *other*, as *bribery and corruption*.

The Secretary of War, J. R. Poinsett, conducted the business with great propriety.

The case of the Tuscaroras peculiarly excited our sympathy. This nation removed from North Carolina in 1712, and found an asylum among the Senecas, a tract of land being assigned them near Niagara Falls. Their numbers are less than three hundred, viz. two hundred and thirty opposed to emigration, and fifty in its favor. When the amended treaty was submitted to them, they objected to it, seeing most of them already possessed good farms, and had become civilized; John Mountpleasant, one of their chiefs, having himself, the present year, more than sixty acres of grain.

The whole Onondaga nation, residing on their Reservation, seem to be unanimous in rejecting the treaty; and they say, they have recently received an assurance from the governor of this

state, that they shall not be molested. The right of purchase remains in the state of New-York.

The Oneidas appear to stand twenty-one in favor of removing west, and six hundred and seventy-six opposed to removal. Should their lands be hereafter sold, the state of New-York will have to become the purchaser.

As respects the St. Regis Indians, we did not clearly learn the relative numbers, *for*, and *against* removal ; but, on examining the treaty, we were pleased to find that they had procured a clause to be added, by which they were not to be compelled by the government to remove.

Believing the foregoing reports contain much information that will be interesting to Friends generally, one thousand copies are directed to be printed for distribution among our members.

Signed on behalf and by direction of the Committee,

WILLIAM C. WHITE, *Clerk.*

APPENDIX.

A.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT, made and concluded this seventh day of August, 1837, between Heman B. Potter, of the city of Buffalo, of the first part, and Samuel Gordon, a Seneca Indian of Cattaraugus Reservation, in the county of Erie, of the second part.

WHEREAS, in conformity with the declared policy of the government of the United States, the proprietors of the pre-emption title of and in the four several tracts of land reserved by the Seneca tribe of Indians, within the said state of New-York, are desirous to induce the above-mentioned tribe of Indians to accept for their future and permanent residence, a tract of country in the territory west of the river Mississippi, appropriated for Indians inhabiting the Atlantic and other neighboring states; and are also desirous, by fair purchase, to extinguish the right of the said Indians, in and to the lands in this state, so reserved by them. And, whereas, in furtherance of these objects, and in order to a future treaty, by which to effect the same, the said proprietors have authorized negotiations to be opened with the chiefs, and other leading men of the said tribe of Indians; and certain offers to be made to them in money, as a permanent fund for the nation, and a compensation for their improvements; and have also deemed it adviseable and necessary to employ the aid, co-operation, and services, of certain individuals who are able to influence the said Indians to accept of the offer so to be made to them. AND, whereas the said Heman B. Potter, the party of the first part, is empowered to act on behalf of the said proprietors, and to contract with any individual whose co-operation and agency may be necessary and efficient, in accomplishing the above-mentioned object; and the said Samuel Gordon, the party of the second part, has agreed to contribute his influence and services in the premises: NOW, THEREFORE, it is mutually agreed, by and between the parties hereto, as follows. *First*, the party of the second part undertakes and agrees to use his best exertions and endeavors, to dispose and induce the said Indians to adopt and pursue the advice and recommendations of the government of the United States, in respect to their removal and future location; and on such fair terms as the party of the first part, and his associates, in the name of the said proprietors, shall propose; to sell and release, by treaty, their said reserved lands, and, on all occasions, to co-operate with and aid the said party of

the first part, and his associates, as he may be from time to time advised, in talks and negotiations with the chiefs, and other influential men of the said tribe, and in the active application of his whole influence at councils, and confidential interviews, for the purpose of effecting a treaty between the said tribe and the said proprietors, for the extinguishment of the Indian title to the said reserved lands. *Second*, In consideration of such efforts, co-operation and services, on the part of the said Samuel Gordon, faithfully bestowed in the premises, the said Heman B. Potter, on his part, and that of his associates, agrees to pay, or cause to be paid, to the said Samuel Gordon, the sum of five thousand dollars, within three months after notice of the ratification by the Senate of the United States, of a valid treaty between the said tribe and the owners of the said pre-emptive title, or their trustees, by which the right and title of said Indians shall be effectually released and extinguished, in and to the said reserved lands. This Agreement, on the part of said party of the first part, being expressly dependant upon a treaty, to be made and ratified, upon terms, conditions, and stipulations, to be proposed and offered by the said party of the first part, and his associates.

H. B. POTTER. (L. s.)
SAMUEL GORDON. (L. s.)

Witness,

O. ALLEN.

It is understood and agreed, that the sum of one thousand dollars is to be added to the written contract.

O. ALLEN.
H. P. WILCOX.

Sept. 29, 1838.

[A copy.]

B

IT IS AGREED, between Heman B. Potter, of the city of Buffalo, of the first part, and Blue Eyes, a Seneca Chief of the Cattaraugus Reservation, of the second part, as follows: That, in case the Seneca tribe of Indians shall accept the offers of the government of the United States, for their removal to the west of the Mississippi river, and shall sell their lands in this state to the pre-emptive owners, upon negotiations now pending; and, in case the said Blue Eyes shall faithfully co-operate with, and aid the said Heman B. Potter, and his associates, as he may be advised from time to time, by his services and influence at councils, and confidential interviews, for the purpose of effecting a treaty between the said tribe and the said proprietors, for the effectual release and extinguishment of the Indian title of, in, and to the said reserved lands, which he engages to do, and sign said treaty; and if such treaty shall be

made, and shall be thereupon ratified by the Senate of the United States, then, the said Heman B. Potter, who is authorized to act in the premises, for said proprietors, hereby stipulates and agrees, for himself and his associates, to pay, or cause to be paid, to the said Blue Eyes, the sum of two thousand dollars, in three months after notice of such ratification; and, also, that the said Blue Eyes shall be entitled to a lease from the said pre-emptive owners, or their trustees, of about fifty acres of land, where he now lives, on the Cattaraugus Reservation, for and during his natural life, to be terminable whenever he shall cease to live on and occupy the same, said lease to be executed as soon after said treaty as said lands shall be surveyed into lots.

Witness, our hands and seals, Sept. 16, 1837.

H. B. POTTER. (L. S.)

His

BLUE X EYES. (L. S.)

mark.

In presence of
SAMUEL GORDON.

[A copy.]

